

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7214

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3739

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS, KN, CM

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: POSSIBLE DEBATE ON KOREAN ISSUE
IN 31ST UNGA

REF: YAOUNDE 1605

1. FOREIGN MINISTER KEUTCHA'S COMMENT REFTEL THAT KOREA NOT COMPARABLE TO JAPAN, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AND THAT KOREA MUST INEVITABLY ACCOMODATE TO SOVIETS OR CHINESE IN OUR VIEW CALLS FOR REBUTTAL. HERE ARE SOME FACTS AND FIGURES EMBASSY YAOUNDE MAY FIND USEFUL IN FUTURE CONVERSATIONS ON KOREA.

2. UNDERLYING STRENGTH OF ROK LIES PRECISELY IN FACT THAT KOREA IS DEVELOPING ECONOMICALLY INTO POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT IN MUCH THE SAME WAY JAPAN DID BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR. SINCE EARLY 1960'S ROK ECONOMY HAS GROWN RAPIDLY AND ITS ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OVER THE PAST
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12 YEARS HAS EXCEEDED EVEN THE MOST OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATIONS,

AS AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH OF REAL GNP SURPASSED 9 PERCENT WHILE PER CAPITA GNP WAS STILL A RELATIVELY LOW \$531 IN 1975, THE SOUTH KOREAN ECONOMY IS NOW OVER THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF THE NORTH'S, IS ONE OF LARGEST IN ASIA, HAS OUT-GROWN CLASSIFICATION AS A LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRY (LEJ), REPORTED \$5 BILLION (27 PERCENT OF GNP) IN 1975 AND NOW POSSESSES MANY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A "MIDDLE ECONOMY", WITH INTERESTS AND PROBLEMS DISTINCT FROM BOTH THOSE OF LDC'S AND THOSE OF THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL NATIONS. PER CAPITA GNP, WHICH ALREADY CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN NORTH'S, EXPECTED TO EXCEED \$1,000 BY 1980. MOST IMPORTANTLY, ITS DOMESTIC SAVINGS HAVE BEEN AVERAGING 20 PERCENT OF GNP, WHICH WITH ITS LOW CAPITAL-OUTPUT RATIO AND REDUCED POPULATION GROWTH (1.7 PERCENT AND FALLING) PUTS IT AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ACHIEVED SELF-SUSTAINING GROWTH.

3. CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AT THIS PACE WILL PROVIDE THE ECONOMIC BASIS FOR A MORE SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE POSTURE. ROK HAS IN FACT ALREADY BECOME SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY AS WELL AS ECONOMIC POWER IN ITS OWN RIGHT. IT NOW HAS LARGEST NON-COMMUNIST ARMY IN ASIA AND IF U.S. FORCES INCLUDED MILITARY EQUATION ON KOREAN PENINSULA IS CURRENTLY ASSESSED TO BE IN ROUGH BALANCE WITH NO IMMEDIATE LIKELIHOOD OF MAJOR NORTH KOREAN INITIATIVES. PRC AND USSR APPARENTLY SEE IT IN THEIR INTEREST AS WE DO TO AVOID HOSTILITY. NORTH KOREA MAINTAINS OVERALL EDGE IN NUMBERS AND POTENCY WEAPONS SYSTEM BUT AGGRAGATE CAPABILITY OF ROK AND U.S. FORCES IS FORMIDABLE AND BELIEVED SUFFICIENT TO DETER NORTHERN ATTACK. WITHIN COMING YEARS ROK/US PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FORCES ARE EXPECTED TO PUT SOUTH KOREA IN POSITION FULL EQUIVALENCY NORTHERN MILITARY FORCES.

4. BEYOND THESE INDICATORS OF INCREASING STRENGTH AND VIABILITY AS SELF-SUSTAINING POWER THE STRONG TIES SOUTH KOREA MAINTAINS WITH ITS PRINCIPLE SUPPORTERS, THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN, AND ITS GROWING TIES WITH OTHER ASIAN, EUROPEAN, AND MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES HELP CONFIRM ITS LEGITIMACY AND PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE AS VIABLE SELF-SUSTAINING MIDDLE POWER. WHILE NORTH KOREA WITH NON-ALIGNED BACKING MAY BE DOING WELL IN PROPAGANDA BATTLE IN INTERNATIONAL

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FORA, IN BILATERAL ITEMS INCREASING NUMBER COUNTRIES BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE AND BENEFIT FROM REAL VALUE OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA. NORTH KOREA BY CONTRAST IS STRUGGLING WITH MAJOR FOREIGN DEBT PROBLEM, INEVITABLE CONSEQUENT STRAINS ON ITS OWN OVERSEAS RELATIONS, AND PROBABLE PROSPECT OF SLOWER FUTURE GROWTH. THESE LATTER FACTORS, WE BELIEVE WILL BE MOST TELLING ONES IN LONGER TERM.

5. NOR DO WE SEE SOUTH KOREANS AS PSYCHOLOGICALLY "UNCONVINCED" AND UNITED ONLY BY FEAR OF NEIGHBORS AS MR. KEUTCHA APPEARS TO BELIEVE. WHILE PSYCHOLOGICALLY SOUTH KOREANS FEEL THREATENED BY ENEMIES AND STILL EXPRESS SOME DOUBTS ABOUT SELVES, AS WELL AS ABOUT U.S. SUPPORT, COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR OTHER SUCCESSES KOREANS ARE GROWING INCREASINGLY PROUD OF THEIR PERFORMANCE AND SELF CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL MAKE IT AS INDEPENDENT NATION. IT IS HARD TO FIND SOUTH KOREAN THESE DAYS NOT WORKING HARD TO THIS END AND ONE RARELY IF EVER HEARS DEFEATIST TALK OR SERIOUS CONCERN EXPRESSED ABOUT CHINESE OR SOVIET DOMINATION. THIS SEEMS TO US A MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR DICTATING AGAINST OUTCOME MR. KEUTCHA PREDICTS.

6. DEPARTMENT ACTION SUGGESTED: DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO GIVE SOME OF THESE POINTS FURTHER CIRCULATION IN EVENT ARGUMENTS SIMILAR TO KEUTCHA'S ARISE ELSEWHERE.
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